

Executive Order in response to the egregious human rights violations in Burma. These measures established the existing prohibition on U.S. private companies making new investments in Burma. The European Union followed suit and imposed economic sanctions on Burma, removing trade preferences, freezing the regime's assets, and issuing a ban on travel visas for the regime's leadership. That the SPDC is not totally insensitive to this kind of pressure became obvious when the military dictatorship surprisingly entered into a secret dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi now almost seven months ago, which unfortunately has not yielded any tangible results.

Existing U.S. investment restrictions, while an important step in the right direction, clearly do not go far enough. To everyone's surprise, despite the existing sanctions regime, imports of Burmese articles and goods into the United States grew steadily and are perfectly legal. We have to close this loophole, and our legislation would do that. We keep the pressure on the SPDC. Our conditions for the SPDC have to be absolutely clear and unequivocal: trade with the United States will only be resumed if the military regime allows sustained and measurable progress in the areas of human rights and democracy, and the SPDC must make significant progress in the talks with the only credible person involved in the ongoing secret negotiations, the winner of the overturned 1990 general elections and Noble Peace Prize Winner, Aung San Suu Kyi.

The 1999 State Department Human Rights Country Report on Burma cited "credible reports that Burmese Army soldiers have committed rape, forced portage, and extrajudicial killing." The report further describes arbitrary arrests and the detention of at least 1300 political prisoners. The most recent report by the State Department for the year 2000 finds that "The Government's extremely poor human rights record and longstanding severe repression of its citizens continued during the year. Citizens continued to live subject at any time and without appeal to the arbitrary and sometimes brutal dictates of the military regime. Citizens did not have the right to change their government. There continued to be credible reports, particularly in ethnic minority areas, that security forces committed serious human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings and rape. Disappearances continued, and members of the security forces tortured, beat, and otherwise abused prisoners and detainees. Prison conditions remained harsh and life threatening, but have improved slightly in some prisons after the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was allowed access to prisons in May 1999. Arbitrary arrest and detention for expression of dissenting political views continued to be a common practice. The Government held Aung San Suu Kyi incommunicado twice in September, following attempts to travel beyond the bounds of Rangoon City and to Mandalay. At year's end, the Government continued to hold Aung San Suu Kyi in detention; it also held 48 members-elect of parliament and more than 1,000 NLD supporters under detention, all as part of a government effort to prevent the parliament elected in 1990 from convening. Since 1962 thousands of persons have been arrested, detained, or imprisoned for political reasons; more than 1,800 political prisoners remained imprisoned at year's end."

In addition, Human Rights Watch reported that children from ethnic minorities are forced

to work under inhumane conditions for the Burmese Army, lacking adequate medical care and sometimes dying from beatings. The UN Special Rapporteur on Burma puts the number of child soldiers at 50,000, one of the highest in the world. In addition, a 1998 International Labor Organization Commission of Inquiry determined that forced labor in Burma is practiced in a "widespread and systematic manner, with total disregard for the human dignity, safety, health and basic needs of the people."

While current sanctions forbid new U.S. investments in Burma, the current Burmese imports into the U.S. rapidly grow and include apparel articles, fisheries products, gems, and tropical timber. In particular, apparel imports into the U.S. grew by 372 percent, rising from \$85.6 million in 1997 to \$403.7 million in

These imports into the U.S. provide the SPDC with growing hard currency income because they are directly involved in the production process as direct or de facto owners of production facilities in the apparel and textile sector.

Mr. Speaker, the United States must stand with the Burmese slave laborers, the exploited children, the imprisoned and raped political opposition members. Passing this important legislation would not only support and strengthen the ILO as a guardian of internationally accepted labor standards, but it would also make clear to the world that the United States will never trade democracy and the respect for human rights for trade benefits and cheap imports.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the text of H. R. 2211 be placed in the record at this point. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important bill, and I call on the House to speedily adopt this legislation.

H.R. —

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Burma Freedom Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The International Labor Organization (ILO), invoking an extraordinary constitutional procedure for the first time in its 82-year history, adopted in 2000 a resolution calling on the State Peace and Development Council to take concrete actions to end forced labor in Burma.

(2) In this resolution, the ILO recommended that governments, employers, and workers organizations take appropriate measures to ensure that their relations with the State Peace and Development Council do not abet the system of forced or compulsory labor in that country, and that other international bodies reconsider any cooperation they may be engaged in with Burma and, if appropriate, cease as soon as possible any activity that could abet the practice of forced or compulsory labor.

SEC. 3. UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR MULTILATERAL ACTION TO END FORCED LABOR AND THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR IN BURMA.

(a) TRADE BAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, until such time as the President determines and certifies to Congress that Burma has met the conditions described in paragraph (2), no

(2) CONDITIONS DESCRIBED.—The conditions described in this paragraph are the following:

(A) The State Peace and Development Council in Burma has made measurable and substantial progress in reversing the persistent pattern of gross violations of internationally-recognized human rights and worker rights, including the elimination of forced labor and the worst forms of child labor.

(B) The State Peace and Development Council in Burma has made measurable and substantial progress toward implementing a democratic government including—

(i) releasing all political prisoners; and

(ii) deepening, accelerating, and bringing to a mutually-acceptable conclusion the dialogue between the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and democratic leadership within Burma (including Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy (NLD) and leaders of Burma's ethnic peoples).

(C) The State Peace and Development Council in Burma has made measurable and substantial progress toward full cooperation with United States counter-narcotics efforts pursuant to the terms of section 570(a)(1)(B) of Public Law 104-208, the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The provisions of this section shall apply to any article entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after the 15th day after the date of enactment of this Act.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL BLAKE ROBERTSON ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding public servant that has dedicated his adult life to serving his Nation as a United States Marine Corps Officer. Colonel Blake Robertson was first commissioned Second Lieutenant in the USMC Reserve in December of 1974. Since that time he has served in a variety of challenging command and staff assignments throughout the United States and overseas. His hard work and demonstrated excellence earned him steady promotions to the rank of Colonel.

Throughout his career Col. Robertson has increasingly taken on more challenging and difficult tasks. In his last assignment, as the Direct Reporting Program Manager for the Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle, he was responsible for developing the Marine Corps' next generation assault amphibian. In this capacity he reported directly to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition) and was responsible for the management of the only Acquisition Category I major defense acquisition program unilaterally managed by the U.S. Marine Corps. He Col. Robertson provided a steady hand in overcoming technical and programmatic challenges in achieving the program's cost, schedule and performance objectives. Given an austere budget and technically challenging